

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE103			
Name of Service:	Mountshannon Childcare Centre			
Address of Service:	Mountshannon, Co. Clare			
Eircode:	V94 YW95			
Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Cahill			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	04/07/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	32
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick			
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan S Meehan			
Title:	Early Years Inspectors			

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Mountshannon Childcare Centre is a purpose-built community childcare service located in the village of Mountshannon, County Clare. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care. It operates Monday to Friday 07:30-18:00. School aged child-care is facilitated in the entrance lobby and the outdoor area at the side of service from 14:00 onwards and during school holidays.

The building accommodates five care rooms, three sleep rooms, a kitchen, sanitary facilities and an outdoor play area at the rear and both sides of the service. The five care rooms included: the Baby room (age range: 1-2 years), the Pre-Wobbler room (age range: 1-2. years), the Junior preschool room (age range: 2-3 years), the Toddler/Wobbler room (age range: 2 – 2.5years) and the Senior pre-school room (age range: 3-5 years of age).

Staffing

Thirteen members of staff and two relief staff are currently employed by the service. On 04/07/2024 the manager, ten members of staff and an auxiliary staff member who prepares and serves the food were present during the inspection. The staff members held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. Records of staff members engagement in continuing professional development were available on the staff files.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11 and 19.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

On the day of the inspection, the manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b)

During the period of the inspection, the manager who is the designated person in charge was available. The staff roster indicated that the designated person or their deputy were always available on site.

The staff files for thirteen members of staff and two relief staff members were reviewed. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Twenty-six validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Where past employer references were not available, four references from a source other than a past employer with evidence of verification were available.

(c)

Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available in respect of fifteen members of staff working at the service.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 months.

(4)

Fourteen members of staff working in the service held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 or an equivalent on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(2)
On the 04/07/2024 an adequate number of adults supervised the children. 9 of staff cared for 35 children in the morning and 32 children in the afternoon. The manager provided relief cover during breaktime.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-
(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) BASIC NEEDS:

The service provided dinner for the children which was supplied by parents, reheated in the kitchen and corresponded with the healthy eating policy and menu plan of the service. All children who attended the service on a sessional, part-time or full-time basis had a hot meal every day. Children had breakfast in the service and fresh fruit were available for snacks. Should children not finish their lunch it was sent home to parents to keep them informed in relation to the amount their child had eaten. An alternative food choice was available as toast was provided to a child who had not eaten dinner.

Drinking water was available throughout the day in each room if a child needed a drink. The children sat together around the tables and were given as much time as they needed to eat their food.

Children who were toilet trained toileted independently with assistance given to those who needed it.

Nappy changing took place by staff in the sanitary accommodation in line with the nappy changing policy and staff were observed to wear gloves and aprons. Staff were observed to wash their hands before and after nappy changing which helped prevent the spread of infection. The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap.

Children were allowed to move freely indoors and outdoors from one activity to the next for specific periods of time. Quiet/rest areas were developed in each room where children could sit and relax in. The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the pre-school rooms. There was a plentiful supply of play props available to support sensorial play. Play equipment was placed in baskets and boxes on shelving to make it more accessible to the children. The children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. The adults modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were praised for their good behaviour.

Interactions with the children were positive and caring, staff were observed to lift, cuddle and comfort children who became upset. Children were praised, encouraged and listened to which supported them to form and sustain secure relationships with the adults.

Staff operated in partnership with parents by sharing individual records for each child which detailed their progress. The person in charge had regular contact with the local childcare committee for training, support and networking purposes.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Children spent lots of their time outdoors playing with the emphasis being on risky and challenging play.

Appropriate all weather clothing and wellingtons were available for the children. Children were observed playing in cubby houses, at mud kitchens, with trucks, riding on trikes, swinging on swings and playing 'catch'.

There were five playrooms available to the pre-school children. The afterschool children were observed to play in the large open space in the reception area while being supervised by their key worker. This service provided a range of developmentally appropriate experiences for the children attending. The range of toys offered stimulation to all the senses.

In the junior preschool room, a sensory room was available off the main playroom which was a calming, quiet space for the children and staff to relax in.

Sensory play materials such as stones in a tuft tray and imaginative play materials such as dress up costumes supported all areas of development. Materials and equipment were freely accessible to the children when needed, for example crayons, paper and paint were available throughout the day, artwork was displayed, and items of interest were at the child's eye level on low level shelving. There were areas of interest such as home corners, library/rest areas, sand play, musical instruments, jigsaws shelf and construction areas evident in the service.

In the senior preschool room, a 'jobs board' identified specific jobs for each child in the group and supported their sense of belonging and self-care.